

- 1) Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson John Metevia
- 2) Roll Call:
  - a. MEMBERS PRESENT: Altimore, Bovid, Carlson, Carney, Metevia, Rankin, Rice, Steidemann, Varela
  - b. MEMBERS ABSENT:
  - c. OTHERS PRESENT: Stephanie Szostak, City Horticulturist
- 3) Minutes of December 3, 2013: Altimore motioned, Rankin seconded to receive minutes of the meeting of December 3, 2013. Motion passed 9-0.
- 4) Call to Audience: None
- 5) City oversight of Circle Area Community Garden: Szostak gave a report on the Circle Area Community Garden. The garden is located on land donated to the City by the Stuart Bergstein family for the purpose of creating community garden. Development of the site began in 2011 using donations from foundations and individual donors. The community garden consists of 27 raised plots, a gazebo, perimeter fencing, and a shed. Gardening started in 2012 with oversight by a non-profit and volunteer committee. Moving forward, the non-profit has asked the City to help keep it going. Under the City, the garden will be available to all city residents on a first come, first served basis with a \$20 application fee. Gardeners need to provide their own seed and plant material. The community garden is organic so no chemical use is allowed, and a water supply is provided. Szostak stated the City is looking for a garden manager 15-20 hours per week. In addition, there is potential for educational sessions hosted by the volunteer garden committee. Applications are available on-line, at the Municipal Service Center, City Hall or the Library, and are due by March 19.
- 6) Fun Zone project kick-off: Murphy gave an update on the Fun Zone renovation project. The City has partnered with the Midland Area Community Foundation as the Fun Zone turns twenty years old to make safety improvements as well as add new features to the playground. Improvements include replacing all wooden decking and handrails with composite material, replacing all the slides, adding accessible play features, rebuilding the train and fire truck, installing a perimeter fence, and adding seating and a shade feature. Murphy stated the goal is to retain the original design and style while adding an exciting new look and new play features. The total project is estimated at \$220,000 with the labor provided by community volunteers. Funding consists of \$20,000 from the City's parks budget, \$10,000 from the Fun Zone endowed maintenance fund, \$65,000 from the Midland Area Community Foundation's community fund, \$20,000 from local service and civic clubs, and \$105,000 from community fundraising. The fundraising consists of the sale of fence pickets which will be engraved and used to make the perimeter fence, and sponsorships for about 30 playground features. Murphy reported the renovation is scheduled for June 4-8, and City Council provided a resolution of support for the project. Volunteers are needed for the planning and construction phases and donations are being sought as well. To get involved, residents can contact the Midland Area Community Foundation or the City Parks and Recreation office. Donations are being handled by the foundation at [www.midlandfoundation.org](http://www.midlandfoundation.org).
- 7) Grant application to Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for Emerson: Murphy gave an update on the Emerson riverfront renovation project. The project includes repurposing the 1938 water intake pump house into an accessible river overlook platform, and creating an accessible fishing dock, boardwalk and floating boat dock. In addition, an accessible parking lot would be built, along with new railing along the existing sea wall and a seating area. The project would connect on both ends to the Rail Trail. Murphy reported the estimated project cost is \$664,000 and to date, the City has secured grants from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (\$35,000), the Friends of the Pere

Marquette Rail Trail (\$5,000) and the Midland Area Community Foundation (\$40,000) along with \$25,000 that will be included in the FY14/15 Parks Capital budget. These funds will be used as a match toward a \$300,000 grant that the City is applying for through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The grant application requires a motion of support from the Parks and Recreation Commission, along with a public hearing and a resolution of support from City Council that will occur at their March 10 meeting. Murphy requested a motion of support from the Commission to apply for the MNRTF grant as well as a recommendation to City Council to support the project via resolution as well. Carney motioned, Bovid seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

- 8) Project Report: Murphy reported that the Currie Stadium concrete restoration project was shut down for the season due to cold temperatures that hindered the concrete curing process. The project will commence once temperatures are conducive to the concrete patching work that remains to be completed. Murphy also reported that the City Forest bridge project is stalled waiting for a permit from the Department of Environmental Quality. The City's bridge engineering contractor has provided DEQ with all the requested information and the permit is being considered by DEQ. The remaining steps, once DEQ approves the submittal, include a public comment period of at least 20 days, after which the DEQ will issue the permit. The original intent was to install the bridge during the winter so it would be ready for use in the spring, but the delay in the DEQ permitting process has resulted in a revised project timeline. Given that we are headed into the spring thaw, Murphy reported the new bridge installation will not occur until mid-summer when the ground dries up and the creek levels drop for the season.
- 9) Old Business: Murphy reported the 2014 recreation fee changes were approved by City Council and will go into effect for this season.
- 10) New Business: Metevia reminded the Commission that there will not be a meeting held in April due to the Midland Public Schools spring break falling the same week.
- 11) Adjourn: Motioned by Altimore, seconded by Steidemann to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Murphy  
Director of Public Services